

Fighting 13th



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The 13th MEU Newsletter

www.usmc.mil/13thmeu

'Underway we go' ... 13th MEU takes 1st at-sea

By Cpl. Andy Hurt
Editor

Marines and Sailors from the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Expeditionary Strike Group-1 untied the USS Tarawa April 14 and took her to sea for the unit's ESGEX, the first of three scheduled at-sea periods.

The exercise is part of pre-deployment work-up training in preparation for the upcoming Western Pacific deployment (WESTPAC 05-1).

Tactical vehicles and equipment were guided through the belly of the ship, as embarkation efforts for the exercise took place under the watchful eyes of members of the 13th MEU command element, along with MEU Service Support Group-13 (MSSG) and the ESG.

The scene on Peir 6 at 32nd Street Naval Station bustled until the warriors of Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, the ground combat element of the MEU, arrived and added the appearance of angry bees

swarming the innocent ship.

On the morning of April 14th, the "Underway" whistle blew over the ship's intercom, as San Diego Port Authority tugboats lashed up to the mighty Tarawa, and chugged her out of port.

Once the boats were cut loose, "The Fleet's Finest" was free to roll under the massive span of the Coronado Bridge.

Sailors and Marines navigated their way through the maze of ladder wells and hatches onto the flight deck to take in one final view of the city before heading out to sea.

Later in the day, and throughout the evening, the "Evil Eyes" of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163 (HMM-163) gracefully landed on the flight deck of the Tarawa, signaling the arrival of



Photo by Cpl. Andy Hurt

A VMA-221 Av-8B Harrier fighter jet takes off of the flight deck aboard the USS Tarawa (LHA 1). The jet is a reinforcement for the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit's Air Combat Element (ACE), Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163.

Throughout the first at-sea period, jets were practicing landing and takeoffs. the MEU's air combat element (ACE).

Squadron attachments, in the form of four AV-8B Harrier fighter jets courtesy of VFA-221, joined the ACE shortly after.

The Command Element, ACE, MSSG-13 and BLT 2/1 combined form a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF).

The MAGTF is a powerful,

ship-to-shore force unique to the Marine Corps. Its' full combat employment is incomplete without the support of our Naval amphibious bretheren.

With the unit underway, Marines and Sailors are building the camaraderie and teamwork integral to efficiency and combat strength for the Global War on Terrorism.

Inside this issue:

Chaplain cuts pride in two; proper and false. Where do your motives fall?

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Commander's Corner



Family and Friends,

As we enter the second half of the Pre-deployment Training Period, I wanted to thank you for the support you have given to your Marines and Sailors to date.

Although the schedule has been extremely busy, the training the unit has received is absolutely essential to ensure we are properly prepared for all of challenges we will face during the upcoming deployment.

The Fighting 13th's performance in all aspects of training thus far has been absolutely exemplary.

That performance is a direct reflection of your Marines' and Sailors' individual talents and, more importantly, the support they all receive from their families, friends and loved ones.

Your unwavering support and understanding has enabled the Marines and Sailors to concentrate on the principle task at hand, preparing for the deployment.

We know this has required great sacrifices on the part of the MEU's families but these sacrifices are necessary to ensure we are the most combat ready force we can be.

The recently completed urban combat training in Victorville, Calif., demonstrated the commitment the Marine Corps is making to ensure your Marines receive the highest quality training possible.

These exercises sponsored by the I Marine Expeditionary Force's (I MEF) Special Operations Training Group, and supported by the Marine Corps, Training and Education Command (TECOM), sought to expose the unit to the threats Marines are currently facing in Iraq and Afghani-

stan and bring the Marines up to speed with the tactics required to counter these threats.

The trainers from I MEF and TECOM went to great lengths to guarantee that the training was as relevant and realistic as possible. This included incorporating lessons learned from units presently deployed and contracting with a Hollywood movie studio to provide special effects and actors.

Based on the response from the Marines, I MEF and TECOM were right on target.

Every Marine and sailor I have talked to stated these exercises were the best training they had ever received.

As we prepare for and embark on our first at-sea period, it is imperative that you continue to prepare our families for the rigors of our forthcoming deployment.

Our Family Readiness Program is essential to ensure the well being of all members of the 13th MEU family during the upcoming deployment. Many of us are already intimately familiar with the skills and resources necessary to prepare for and deal with the challenges that will invariably occur when the MEU deploys.

In support of this goal, the Marine Corps has established an effective Family Readiness Program that minimizes the challenges of the deployment, while providing our spouses with the tools they need to correct problems with confidence themselves.

Our Key Volunteer Network was established to fulfill our responsibilities to support the families of our Fighting 13th Marines and Sailors. Headed by our Key Volunteer Coor-

dinators, Winnie Pigott and Chrissy Spooner, the KVN is the Command's official conduit of information between the MEU and its families and is an essential source of information about resources and services available to help solve the problems that may occur during our deployment.

I urge you to use this network as your first line of defense when dealing with any of the challenges that can and will occur while our Marines and Sailors are deployed.

Our 13th MEU Family Readiness Program does not limit itself to supporting only married Marines and Sailors.

Our Family Readiness Officer continues to solicit email and mailing addresses for a point of contact, normally a close friend or family member, that our Single Marines and Sailors can designate to keep informed throughout our deployment cycle.

These points of contact will receive a copy of our 13th MEU monthly newsletter, as well as email updates reporting on significant MEU events.

If you have any questions regarding our Family Readiness Program, please send an e-mail to Capt. K.D. Robbins, your Family Readiness Officer at: fro@13meu.usmc.mil or call him at (760) 763-0740.

Once again, I want to thank you, your family members and friends for your diligence and dedication.

Your performance has been exemplary and I have no doubt that you will continue to exceed all expectations.

Semper Fidelis,
J. K. La Vine
13th Marine Expeditionary Unit
Commanding

From the Doc: Prevent heat casualties this summer

By HM1 Christopher Roganti

13th MEU Command
Corpsman

Summer is just around the corner, and with summer we typically see an extreme increase in the number heat related injuries.

In my 16 years I have seen an immeasurable amount of heat injuries; especially in Marines.

There are simple precautions that you can take to avoid heat related injuries. I have listed

some basics here, but heat casualty prevention is a constant task, where liability falls among the individual. Here are some simple steps you can take to prevent heat injuries this summer:

First, make certain that you are drinking plenty of water.

The recommended amount of water for an individual on a daily basis is eight cups; however, this is under normal conditions.

For Marines in a field or training environment I recom-

mend double that amount. Avoid exercising between 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

In order to prevent heat exhaustion before it starts, be aware of the warning signs.

Beginning signs of heat exhaustion include paleness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, fainting and a moderately increase body temperature.

If you begin to experience any of these symptoms, move to a shady or air conditioned environment and drink water. Avoid alcohol use the night

before a field exercise.

Alcohol severely dehydrates the body and significantly increase your chance for heat exhaustion or even heat stroke.

If a Marine becomes unconscious as a result of a heat related incident, immediately move to a cool area, remove clothing, place cold packs on the head, neck, groin, and ankles and call for medical help immediately.

For more information, call the 13th MEU corpsmen at (760) 763-0739.

Fighting 13th



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Chaplain's Corner

Proper pride reflects your place in life

By Navy Lt. Edward Waldron
Command Chaplain

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. (Prov 16:18 (NKJV))

For many of faith, pride can be a problem. Being a United States Marine or Sailor, our heads are filled with the proud traditions and memories of our service.

Then we look at passages like Proverbs, which may raise questions about our pride. Does God hate pride? Yes and No.

False pride comes from being; proper pride comes from doing and accomplishment.

False pride expects recognition based upon being, and demands people to treat us differently.

It is in the face of others with a sense of superiority, and can be insulted.

It puts our being in the face of others by saying, "I am good; I am a Marine; I am what ever race."

The implied statement is that I am just too good. False pride sometimes says that we are too good to do some jobs.

False pride turns off people, causes fights

and enables people to cheer when we fail.

Proper pride never has to be advertised.

As a prior Marine, I find encouragement in the proud accomplishments of

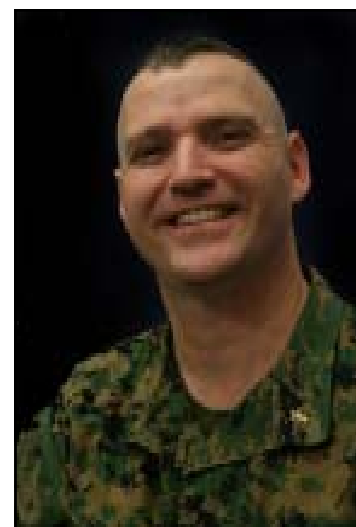
those who served before me, and they have become a model for my service today.

Every job we, as service members, do comes with pride; so do it well.

We don't tell others how good we are, but we show them.

Our actions will speak louder than our words. Today, take pride in all that you do and take part in the proud heritage of our service.

Blessings,
Chaplain Waldron



13th MEU News Briefs

Tuition Assistance

Leaders should ensure Marines have reviewed MARADMIN 576/04, which addresses the Marine Corps Tuition Assistance Funding Policy. All active duty Marines and reservists on continuous active duty are eligible for TA per the instructions and policies established by the message. TA funds are authorized up to 100 percent of tuition, but not to exceed \$250 per semester hour equivalent, and \$4,500 per individual per fiscal year.

Service members are responsible for the portion of tuition and other courses not funded by TA. Assistance is authorized for officers only if they agree to remain on active duty for two continuous years after completing the TA funded course.

If Marines are allowed to voluntarily resign before the two-year obligation is served, the service member is obligated to repay the government a pro-rated amount of TA expended in accordance with the amount of time remaining on active duty. The policy may not be waived. For more information regarding Tuition Assistance, predeployment and deployed education programs that will enable you take advantage of these opportunities, please contact Major W. N. Pigott, 13th MEU Education Officer.

Marine On-Line

All 13th MEU Command Element Marines are required to enroll in the Marine On-Line database.

A recent overhaul of the network by Defense Finance

and Accounting Services in Kansas City, Mo., has streamlined the processing of leave requests, personnel rosters and pay for Marines. For more information, contact Gunnery Sgt. Albino Parra, S-1 Chief, at (760) 763-0735.

Marine Cash

The Marine Cash system will be the only method used to purchase items and services aboard the USS Tarawa and USS Cleveland. Cash can no longer be used to make purchases. Marines assigned to the USS Pearl Harbor will use the ATM-At-Sea System.

While on board, use your Marine Cash card to purchase items from the Ship's Store, ship's vending machines and pay for MWR services.

During port visits, use your Marine Cash card at ATMs and in stores that accept MasterCard. The Marine Cash card is a debit card that has no effect on your credit rating. This standard system will be used for future deployments. There are three ways to deposit funds to your Marine Cash account: First, while deployed, a Split Pay amount may be sent directly to your Marine Cash account.

Second, you can link your Marine Cash account to an existing checking account to make electronic funds transfers. Lastly, you can take cash or checks directly to the Disbursing Office to be deposited into your Marine Cash account. For more information, contact 1st Lt. Anthony Glasgow, 13th MEU Disbursing Officer, at (760) 763-1660.

Warrior Birthdays

April

Staff Sgt. Roberto Lopez, Jr. - April 8

Lance Cpl. James D. Evans - April 19

Capt. Armando C. Budomo - April 27

Sgt. Todd Calkins - April 30

May

Master Sgt. Charles Pickens - May 4

Lt. Col. Andrew Blackhurst - May 9

Pfc. Brent Godfrey - May 10

Maj. William Pigott, Jr. - May 14

Capt. Kohtaro Terahira - May 19

Staff Sgt. Oscar Luna - May 20

Cpl. Matthew Smith - May 21

Maj. Brian Proctor - May 25

The Public Affairs Office wants YOU!

For submission in the Fighting 13th. Submit any ideas you have to the Public Affairs Office at 13meupao@13meu.usmc.mil, or call (760) 763-0740. Submissions can also be sent via snail mail to:

13th Marine Expeditionary Unit
ATTN: Public Affairs Office
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Family Readiness Corner

By Capt. K.D. Robbins
Family Readiness Officer

As the pre-deployment work-up cycle continues for the Marines and Sailors of the Fighting 13th, so does the pre-deployment work-up cycle for our families.

The MEU Public Affairs Office will offer valuable information through our various venues to include our 13th MEU website, www.usmc.mil/13thmeu and the "Fighting 13th" monthly newsletter. This information will help you and your families to assume a proactive role involving administrative, personal and legal matters associated with a deployment and life in the military. On May 4, the MEU will present it's official Pre-deployment brief for the spouses of our married Marines and

Sailors. This briefing is an opportunity for spouses to familiarize themselves with the resources available to them while we are on deployment. Please make every effort to attend.

Deployment Briefing

A pre-deployment briefing for families and friends is scheduled May 4 at Sharkey's in Camp Del Mar. For more information, contact Capt. Kent Robbins, Family Readiness Officer, at FRO@13meu.usmc.mil, or call 763-0740.

Military Spouse Appreciation Day

May 6 is military spouse appreciation day. Husbands and wives should take the time to reflect on the ultimate commitments and sacrifices their spouses have made, and how important the job of a

military spouse can be, and thank them.

Beach Bash at Del Mar

The 13th MEU has scheduled a Beach Bash for June 4 at the Camp Del Mar Beach. Food, drinks, games and more will be provided for families and friends of the Fighting 13th. For more information, contact the Family Readiness Officer at 763-0740, or e-mail FRO@13meu.usmc.mil.

Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills

The LINKS program is ideal for newly married spouses and spouses who have yet to go through a deployment. It offers an introduction to Marine Corps terminology, benefits and support services. Sessions are offered weekdays, evenings and Saturdays. Free, on-site childcare will be available.

For more information on LINKS programs, contact your 13th MEU Family Readiness Officer at: FRO@13meu.usmc.mil.

Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program

The PREP program is available to engaged and married couples interested in developing better communication, teamwork, problem-solving skills, hidden issues, commitment and friendships. For more information on PREP, contact your 13th

Upcoming Training Events

- The 13th MEU is currently underway with ESG-1 aboard the USS Tarawa. BLT 2/1, ACE, MSSG-13 and Command Element Marines are also participating in a revised Combined Arms Exercise (RCAX) at Marine Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif.

- April 20-May 2 Revised Combined Arms Exercise (RCAX)

- May 11-27 - Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPUTEX). Second Underway Period.

- June 9-20 - Special Operations Capable Exercise (SOCEX). This exercise is the third and final at-sea period before the unit is schedule for a Western Pacific deployment (WESTPAC 05-1)

Fighting 13th Logo Gear List

Logo Watches: \$10

"Dry fit" (Poly-wick) Shirts (Black or White): \$20

Fighting 13th Polo Shirt: \$20

Fighting 13th Wind-shirt: \$25

Fighting 13th Green Skivy Shirt: \$8

Lexan Water Bottle: \$5

Fighting 13th Logo Watch Cap: \$5

Old WestPac Shirt: \$1 (XXL Only)

Fighting 13th Coffee Mug: \$3

Key Chain: \$1 (Wood) \$2 (Metal)

Patches: \$4

Stickers: \$.50



15th MEU(SOC) returns to ESG after Iraq tour

By Gunnery Sgt. Robert Knoll
15th MEU Public Affairs Chief

ABOARD USS BONHOMME RICHARD (April 17, 2005) — The 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) returned to Expeditionary Strike Group 5 ships after conducting a month of aggressive security and stabilization operations in southern Baghdad, Iraq, to disrupt insurgent operations.

The journey to Baghdad began after the MEU completed a month of sustainment training at Kuwait's Udairi Range.

"Udairi allowed us to bring our air, artillery, mortars, direct fire weapons all together to get that synergy of combined arms," according to Maj. Robert Salasko, 37, assistant operations officer and native of Princeton, N.J.

Once the training was complete, the MEU spent about a week planning the movement to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Falcon. It took only six days to move more than 2,000 Marines using a combination of tractor trailers, convoys and strategic airlift.

"Usually units have months to plan this (type of movement) because it's a big deal. We're talking receiving, staging, onward movement and integration of a whole force. We had seven days and by MEU (SOC) standards that's a lot but most of these units that come up here are planning a year out," Salasko said.

The MEU's Air Combat Element, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 165 (REIN), conducted missions from Al Taqaddum Airbase and Al Asad Airfield, both located west of Baghdad. Being just a short flight from the FOB allowed the squadron to support many of the MEU's Close Air Support or CAS missions.

The task given to 15th MEU was to "reinforce or enhance the security and stability operations that are being conducted by Multi-National Division Baghdad," Salasko said.

They conducted these operations in an area that had been left unmonitored for approximately six weeks, so there was an increase in insurgent activity prior to the MEU's arrival.

The MEU's area of operations, 350 square kilometers of mostly rural farmland, was just a few kilometers from FOB Falcon which allowed for quick resupply missions and a variety fire support from both helicopter assets and artillery capable of engaging enemy forces within minutes of a request.

Before jumping into the fight, key leaders were shown the AO in armored humvees by Army soldiers from 256th BCT to learn the terrain and identify locations with the majority of insurgent activity.

One of the insurgent's most popular weapons remains improvised explosive devices, which continue to threaten the safety of service members conducting SASO missions.

Marines and soldiers were also continually threatened by small-arms, rocket and mortar fire.

"We analyzed the enemy and what we saw was that their center of gravity was their IED capability. That's where they were honing



Photo by Sgt. Thomas Benoit

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Pfc. Erik Garza, 22, a machine gunner with Charlie Company, Battalion Landing Team 1/1, slings his M-240G machine gun over his shoulder on a patrol near the Tigris River. The 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) is currently conducting security and stability operations here in the greater Baghdad area. all their success," Salasko said. However, their vulnerability was that they needed to be present to detonate the device.

To combat the IED threats, Marines from Battalion Landing Team 1/1's Alpha, Bravo and Charlie companies went to the field for approximately ten days each to conduct foot patrols through rural farming areas and specifically near major roads.

On patrols, they conducted vehicle check points and house searches to look for explosives, unexploded military munitions and anything that can be used to make an IED.

Salasko said that while the MEU wasn't in Baghdad as long as other units, they definitely made an impact.

Insurgents who had migrated to the area that wasn't being patrolled were quickly removed by the aggressive actions of the 15th MEU.

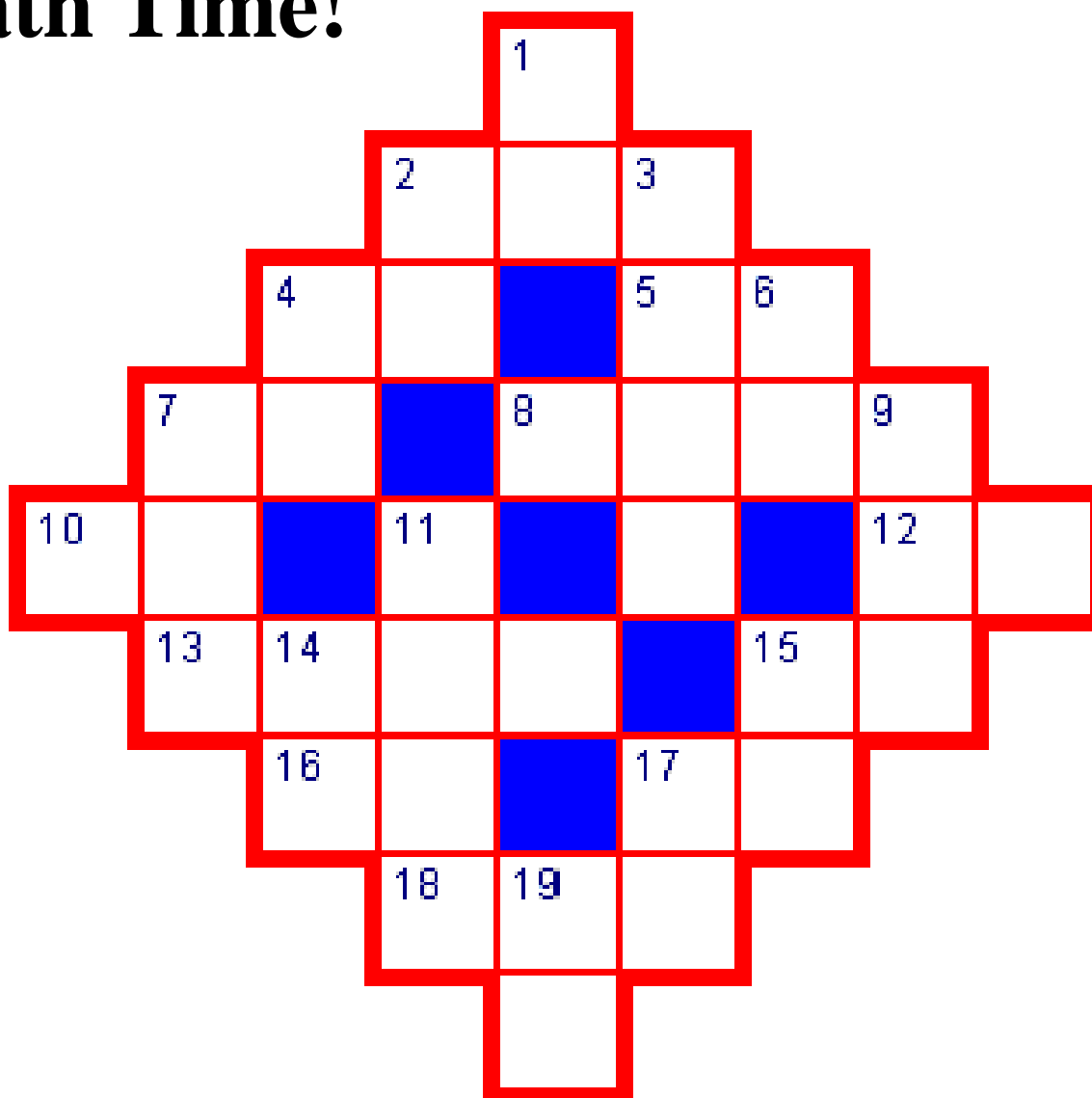
"The area was definitely presenting itself as a 'hardened place' for the enemy," said Salasko.

"With us coming in and having this dynamic concept of ops ... we presented this area that was dominated by Marines."

In mid-April, the MEU withdrew their forces from Baghdad and turned the area over to the Army's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment that will assume all of the MEUs battle space.

This was the second combat tour in Iraq for the 15th MEU, which came just two years after their first visit to the country.

Math Time!



Down

1. A third of sixty-three
2. Four times five
3. Half of 5642
4. Six times seven
6. $14 + 21 + 48$
7. Half of 1244
9. Five times 93
11. 2341 doubled
14. 1 down plus 2 down
15. Weeks in a year
17. Days in a fortnight
19. Hours in a day

Across

2. Four times fifty-three
4. 2 down doubled
5. Forty-six plus 4 down
7. 14 down plus twenty-one
8. 4321 re-arranged
10. A quarter of 128
12. A fifth of 325
13. Five times 493
15. Half of 110
16. A quarter of seventy-two
17. A dozen
18. 112 doubled

Answers:

